Prepared for: **The Jim Joseph Foundation**

THE JIM JOSEPH FOUNDATION
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Taking Stock and Offering Thanks:
Year 4 Learnings

May 2022

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Year 4 Portfolio Contents

Professional Development Initiative: Taking Stock and Offering Thanks

Although the Professional Learning Community made up of participants in the Jim Joseph Foundation Professional Development Initiative formally disbanded more than a year ago, the work of the evaluation team has continued. As planned, toward the end of 2021, we returned for one last round of clinical interviews with alumni of the program, and over the last few months we have continued to field the Shared Outcomes Survey to program participants, typically between two and six months after their programs concluded. We are pleased to now submit the last two deliverables associated with these two activities, the final deliverables from a mold-breaking initiative for the Foundation.

These deliverables show that the programs fulfilled their core goals. Shared Outcomes Survey data indicate that, overall, the programs helped participants become much more knowledge about and more accomplished in performing the professional tasks for which they are responsible, what we called "ways of thinking and doing." Clinical interview data indicate that these professional outcomes have been quite durable, although with the passage of time interviewees found it increasingly difficult to draw causal links between what they know and can do today and what they gained from their programs. Survey data also show that, taken together, the programs have socialized participants into professional communities that the participants very much value. Again, interview data depict how important these communities have been, especially since the start of the pandemic, and how, in the words of one interviewee, "relationships have become partnerships." Finally, survey data reveal the degree to which those program participants who started out with less intensive Jewish backgrounds have had an opportunity to grow and feel more confident as *Jewish* educators.

The evaluation work we have conducted has helped identify the features of high-quality professional development, both in conceptual terms (about which we wrote at the end of last year) and by means of thick accounts of how such features are formed and experienced (through five case studies). Evaluation instruments designed to track the trajectories of 10 diverse programs—especially the Participant Audit and the Shared Outcomes Survey—have informed further field-wide work, first in the Collaborative for Applied Research in Jewish Education's *On the Journey* survey and now in our Exceptional Jewish Leaders and Educators work.

Of course, as in any ambitious initiative of this kind, not every component part performed quite as was hoped: some programs struggled to complete all of their commitments; a few could not build, in a more lasting fashion, on the opportunity provided by the initiative. Some were deflected more severely from their paths by the pandemic than were others. Similarly, some pieces of the evaluation fell short of what we had hoped. We are disappointed to have completed only five case studies and not ten, and our efforts to track the initiative's broader impact also did not materialize as we had hoped.

Taking stock, we feel privileged to have been able to both document and contribute to a pathbreaking effort which has enabled hundreds of Jewish educators grow in ways that would not otherwise have been possible and which has seen some organizations develop far beyond what they had imagined. Thank you for giving us this opportunity and for being such supportive colleagues over these four years.

Slowly Ripening Fruits: Learnings from a Fourth Year of Clinical Interviews

For the last four years, since soon after the launch of the Jim Joseph Foundation's Professional Development Initiative, every 12 months our team has interviewed a sample of participants from each of the 10 grantee programs. These interviews have explored educators' motivations for participating in the programs, what they experienced during the time they took part, what they gained from these experiences, and, finally, what program alumni perceive to have been the impact of these experiences on the trajectory of their professional careers.

As part of an ambitious program of evaluation, this has been one of the boldest strands of our work. We started out with a sample of 30 participants and have worked hard to retain as many as possible over the duration of the study. As time has passed, this has become progressively more challenging. In 2020, we managed to recruit 26 participants for a third round of interviews. Over the last few months, coming to the end of 2021, we succeeded in interviewing only 15 members of the original sample, from eight of the programs. (We were not able to connect with any participants in either the Yiddish Book Center or Makom/Moishe House programs.) Some sample members have left the organizations where they originally worked (their emails bounced), some have left the field altogether (as we learned from program directors), and some perhaps did not feel they had more to say that they had not already shared (our own speculation based on people's responses when we spoke with them a year ago). Given that the interviewees were all members of the first cohorts to participate in the programs, which more than half completed more than two years ago, their commitment to ongoing participation in the study has dwindled.

Nevertheless, four years after the start of the initiative, a 50% response rate is still methodologically reasonable. With the passage of time, although it has become increasingly difficult (for interviewees and for us) to trace the influence of specific programs on their work today, the 15 interviews we did conduct do allow us to observe the unfolding of people's careers and the role of the programs in these processes. More than reassessing findings we had previously observed, these interviews allowed us to see processes for the first time that only take shape slowly. For this reason, it has been worthwhile persisting with this fourth round of interviews.

Growing into Leadership, Whether Intentionally or Organically

Last year, we noted how just two of the ten programs—Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion's Executive MA and JCC Association of North America's Sheva Center Leadership Institute—were marketed and designed to cultivate field leaders or institutional leaders. Their efforts seem to have borne fruit among those we interviewed. At the same time, the trajectories followed by alumni of other programs help indicate how even when people's rank or title did not change, they have organically grown into positions of responsibility and leadership.

Two graduates of the HUC program made clear how their program has encouraged and enabled them to assume leadership roles. As one described it, this was the intent of the program:

> *When I started the degree, I knew I was a good teacher, but I wasn't sure I was a leader at the school; the degree helped me understand I can be a great leader of the school and that there's a way to combine being in the classroom and being a leader.* —HUC

A fellow program participant arrived at a similar conclusion thanks to the assurance she gained through the program. It is striking how, in her own words, she saw her new standing as "deserved." That is surely a perspective that does not happen accidentally; it must have been purposely encouraged by those who taught her.

> *I see myself differently both as a Jewish educator and Jewish leader. I used to not think about myself as a leader. It was uncomfortable. This past year I was asked to coteach with an Orthodox rabbi—I would have been intimidated, and now I was just honored. I felt like I deserve that spot and he recognized it.* —HUC

Although we have been able to speak with all three Sheva participants in the sample in this round of interviews (likely due to their program only recently concluding), none of our interviewees has yet taken on a director position, unlike many other members of their cohort. Each has assumed, or plans to assume, a more senior role in the workplace. One has left the JCC where she was employed and has moved to another community where she aspires to open her own school. The other two, for various personal reasons, declined the opportunity to take on an administrative role, and each has become a curriculum specialist, a role that allows them, as one of them put it, "to work with all of their colleagues, and step into every classroom." As one of them explained:

> *I saw that there were many opportunities to enrich our classrooms with it. We needed an educator who knew enough about development and someone who's driven by Jewish values and human values to push this forward. And that's my work. ... [Thanks to] Sheva, I've been given a platform to share my learnings. The staff sees me in a different way because of what I've done. As an educator, I have much more confidence, I continue to learn and it's a good model.* —Sheva

Interviewees from the other programs have also assumed positions of responsibility and leadership roles in their places of work. But these developments have occurred more organically, as in the following examples:

> *I'm still in the same role, starting my fifth year. My role got bigger in terms of expanding the organization and our services. We changed our name, we have new curriculum, we delivered our online facilitator training. I'm involved in more fundraising for the organization, building out strategic partnerships, doing more strategy work.* —Gen Now

> *I'm still at the synagogue, I have additional responsibilities in fundraising, director of strategic development. I do development, PD, strategic planning for the organization. I took some of these responsibilities from others—from the CEO and senior rabbi. I've done components of this work before, but now it's officially on my resume.* —Next Gen

Occasionally, interviewees link these developments to the profile they gained as a consequence of their professional development experience or to their now being more knowledgeable about certain issues. In these cases, the change can probably be traced to a PDI experience, and some make this connection. It is also possible that some of the changes that have occurred in people's careers are simply the consequence of an individual having become more experienced over time; the same opportunities might have come their way had they not participated in one of the programs. An HUC graduate made precisely this point while highlighting the mix of factors that can contribute to being offered new responsibilities or to being perceived as a leader:

> *I was approached by the head of school to be on the school's COVID task force. I agreed to participate. The reason why I was approached has to do with a few things, including the EMA program and the experience I have at the school. I store a lot of organizational memory. I also have a reputation as someone who can see both the details and the big picture. I don't know if I would be on the task force without the EMA—the head of school sees me in the leadership position.* —HUC

Over time, then, it becomes increasingly difficult to link a person's present circumstances to a training experience from two or more years ago. At best, it might be possible to identify a starting point, an initial prompt that set a process in motion, in which one thing led to another. It is less easy to assert that the responsibilities a person holds today can be attributed to having participated in a particular program, especially when, as one interviewee neatly put it, the program was "a boost, but not life changing."

Durable Gifts

If, in most cases, the "first causes" of interviewees' circumstances today, and how they go about doing things, have become increasingly difficult to identify over time, some with whom we spoke could still point to something of lasting significance they learned during their time on a program that continues to be important today. As one interviewee explained, she can point to something which "didn't impact my journey, but I use it." For example, two years on, a participant in M²'s Relational Circle could point to what has been an important conceptual framework for him:

> *The relational framework that was at the heart of the M² experience was the vision that I bring to my work. My leadership framework stems from this focus on relational engagement.* —M²

A former Ayeka participant talked even more dramatically about how his practices today have changed from what they once were, and how the fundamentals of his relationships with students are strongly colored by what he learned in the program:

> *I used to think of myself as a policeman, trying to enforce the rules. Now, I'm trying to get the kids to do these things of their own accord. I see myself as a coach. I've changed my strategy for getting them to do things in Judaism. I'm putting the ball in their court. ... Because of Ayeka. I shifted from a sympathetic to an empathetic teacher. That really sums it up in one sentence.* —Ayeka

The Reggio Emilia principles that graduates of the Sheva program absorbed continue to be a powerful point of reference for those with whom we spoke. These principles have provided a way for educators to think about young children and their growth, about their work as educators, as well as about themselves.

> *I don't care about what this new role is called, it's about why we're doing it and how. I'm pushing pedagogy, not technology or* teva. *... There are pieces of me that are Jewish, Judaism is a part of my life, I embrace the values, I lived in Israel. That's a part of a seamless Judaism—everything is driven by that. We can't disconnect Reggio-inspired values from Judaism—they are so intertwined.* —HUC

These examples clarify how durable big ideas can be, and how they can have a lasting effect in reorganizing the ways in which people think about their work.

There may also be another dimension to their durability. In previous years, we noted how interviewees gained tools and techniques in these programs that have proved more long-lasting than we expected. When we began this work, we assumed that such tools would not have lasting value; we imagined they would have quite a short shelf life compared to the big ideas. We were repeatedly surprised when this was not the case. This recent set of interviews indicates that techniques and tools gain durability when they are grounded in a bigger set of understandings, when they derive from a theory that gives them special meaning.

The story of a former iCenter participant is especially interesting in this respect. This person had been in the Israel experience business but found his job discontinued due to COVID-19. He transferred into the technology sector, where he was hired to do facilitation. As he explains it, he continues to draw extensively on what he learned during the program, even if the content is no longer Israel. It seems as if the iCenter's relational principles have shaped the practices he continues to employ, albeit with different content.

> *A lot of what iCenter does is connecting with people, facilitation, better communication, helping learners where they are at, so it's transferable. ... A lot of the facilitation techniques I got there [are] applicable. The engagement techniques too. The content is less relevant. But the method is. ... iCenter was one of the pivotal points in my career development that brought me into the career I ultimately have now. I staffed a trip, I got a mentor who recommended Birthright Fellows, that led to Shorashim. Helping people grow personally was a part of that experience and I keep doing that. I took methodology and pedagogy. It was the right move, and the right career choice. The focus on the learner.* —iCenter

We speculate that a similar dynamic explains what might seem like a mundane example offered by a Next Gen graduate.

> *I still have the M² values cards sitting in my desk, and I use them when I run PD. I utilized the skills I got from the fellowship—the retreat I ran, we used situation behavior impact from CCL, feedback loop. It's hard to change behaviors, but I can see how my colleagues are using what they've learned.* —Next Gen

A distinctive feature of M²'s approach is the extent to which its program leaders ground the everyday practices they model in big ideas. Sometimes, participants find that there are too many big ideas; they can be overwhelming. But then, unexpectedly, a couple of years after these experiences, interviewees readily offered unprompted examples of some of those ideas, such as "thirdness," and various theories of relational engagement. We suspect that these ideas give a kind of ballast to the many techniques and methods that are also presented to program participants. The ideas ensure that the techniques that participants encounter are

not just throw-away objects with a short shelf life; they are understood to be more serious, which is what contributes to their durability.

Shared Programmatic DNA

Perhaps the most durable gift participants gained from these programs has been the professional networks they have formed, or, as one interviewee memorably put it, the "relationships that have become partnerships." Another interviewee reported how she was "still in touch with some of the people on a regular basis, they help inform my work," something she found remarkable since the program "didn't support it, in other words, they invested in us when we were there, but not after." Repeatedly, interviewees returned to this theme as one of the most significant outcomes of their professional development.

It is worth recollecting that during the first round of interviews many participants communicated how the strongest motivation for signing up had been their interest in connecting with colleagues and peers. They explained that this was not only from a desire to learn from others, but also because they were looking for an opportunity to connect with a larger community than the one in which they worked. This interest was both about accessing practical resources that could enhance participants' work and about the psychological support and sense of belonging to a cohort of professionals. Over time, during subsequent years, we noted how the personal and professional dimensions of these cohort relationships became fused, with some highlighting the professional dimensions of these networks (having access to a sounding board, opinions, feedback, and additional opportunities), and others pointing to personal outcomes (friendships, emotional support, and the exchange of advice).

Three years on from those first interviews, those relationships are understandably thickest for cohorts that ran longest. This helps explain why, when reflecting on what he gained from HUC's EMA, an interviewee succinctly touched on all of the major themes we had previously identified:

> *[Most valuable gains are] the bonds with the rest of the cohort, not only personally, but professionally. We share goals. I value them, we share the language. To be able to have them as thought partners.* —HUC

For those who participated in shorter programs, the relationships have been less personal and do not go so deep, but they still constitute a valuable and ongoing professional resource, functioning more as a professional network rather than as a kinship group.

> *It's not the whole cohort, but I still speak with several people—we are still all on the chat group, and some people are more active. I wonder what it would mean to have more intentional alumni engagement if money was no issue.* —M^2

> *I'm still in touch with the cohort, I tapped that network several times in my job (like to invite them to teach)—the connections have been nice. I'm hoping they will also be valuable when I'm ready to look for a new job.* —iCenter

If we had started out thinking that the formation of these professional relationships was secondary to the primary content of the programs, the many interviewees who remarked—even a few years later—on either

the intrinsic or extrinsic value of these relationships make clear how wrong we were. These professional relationships may not be the most important outcome people have derived from the programs, but they have been probably the most commonly experienced outcome. This phenomenon indicates the extent to which the forming of such relationships is part of the DNA that cohort programs pass on to their participants.

Paying It Forward

More vividly than in any previous round of interviews, in this round of data gathering we have become aware of the extent to which participants contribute to a ripple effect that starts from the programs in which they participated. This might be because they now occupy professional roles from which they can actively mobilize their learning for the benefit of others, or because they are now in positions where they can model for colleagues different ways of doing things. They might also have more confidence to act in these ways, having gained a newfound mastery themselves, perhaps after some less-than-perfect rehearsals.

These possibilities are all conveyed by the following collection of comments, all of which testify to the extent to which program alumni have paid forward the learning they have experienced. This was not a preordained outcome to be expected from this initiative, and it offers encouragement to the idea that when educators gain insights and resources of value, they will probably be inclined to share them with others. If this sharing does not happen more frequently, it is more likely because of unreceptive audiences or constricting contexts than because educators are engaged in some kind of hoarding.

> *At the end of EMA, I decided that I want to support other teachers, not only at my school, but around the world. I have been doing it intensively through a Facebook iTaLAM group. I post pictures and videos on how I use it for others to learn. I took it upon myself after the program because it felt important, and it only gets stronger. People ask me for materials, suggestions, advice.* —HUC

> *When I hired people in the past, I felt like I wasn't getting the right people. This time around I got the right people, they feel like they are perfect. I have to believe it's because of the language I used in the job descriptions. My values showed through it, and the right people applied. I tried to emulate what was modeled for me around intentionality—I tried to bring that intention now into building a team in my own organization. It impacts them and our relationships and the kids we serve.* —HUC

> *In my teaching component, I'm trying to make sure I'm not performing, but connecting. I want to start making appointments with all the teachers to support them developing Israel curriculum—finding something that's relevant to them. And it's about our relationship changing. And bringing people and ideas together .... I want to continue working with the "lenses." We created a vision statement for the school. I want to continue reflecting on that. It makes growth with the teachers.* —Sheva

> *I find most of the work I do with faculty has a ripple effect. Faculty got better in their relationships with students. I have better tools to help my educators. I would take the exact activities we did and then faculty would take it to students. But there's also a bigger picture—what it means to be in a relationship, doing character work.* —M[2]

A Virtuous Professional Development Cycle: The More the More

With all of the programs either having concluded or being very close to doing so, this final round of interviews constituted an opportunity to explore the interviewees' appetite for further experiences of professional development. While COVID-19 has dulled some of their enthusiasm or limited their capacity to engage in more experiences because of personal or professional pressures, the great majority of interviewees were interested in exploring, or had already explored, other professional learning experiences.

Based on what we have observed among these 15 interviewees, we are tempted to argue that positive experiences of professional development whet rather than satiate people's appetite for more. Quality professional development helps people appreciate how much more they can grow and how much they can enjoy doing so. Some have said so explicitly:

> *Before Ayeka I only participated in PD because I was told to do so. Now I want to do it.* —Ayeka

> *It's really important to identify the areas that I feel lacking so I can grow—HUC helped me learn that. I don't have enough background in developing a curriculum, so I now am pursuing this.* —HUC

Of course, what people are interested in learning varies widely, depending on the intensity of what they just experienced and on how dynamic their career goals are, as the following examples make plain:

> *I wouldn't go to a formal program at this time. Small things for now would work better for me. [The EMA] was a big commitment and I can't do it again so soon.* —HUC

> *Maybe some small little trainings here and there, on board development, fundraising. I've been looking more into philanthropy experiences. I'd love to go do a master's in Jewish studies and philanthropy. There's an interesting program at Indiana University. I'd love to elevate my skills in this space of being more engaged in the nonprofit world.* —Gen Now

> *I'd like to become an ED of a Jewish nonprofit, so I think about building my skills up in that direction. It's also possible that I continue on the development piece, get into legacy work. I try to align PD with my career goals, and I want to continue having opportunities to build out my network with thoughtful people who are passionate about our work.* —HUC

> *I'm working on a couple of things: how am I going to help people develop themselves and how do I develop myself? I need to have a mentor; I need to be in dialogue. We need to have this in the field. This is the answer to turnover, to how people see themselves as professionals.* —Sheva

We were a little skeptical when we started this work about the phenomenon of serial participants in professional development. We thought we would find among the program participants the usual suspects who worked their way through the available opportunities. We even tried (unsuccessfully) to identify such people in our Participant Audit. This last round of interviews helps clarify the dimensions of this phenomenon, and what drives those who *always* seem to be doing professional development. They are seekers, individuals who are looking to improve their practice and explore new ways of making a contribution, and they know there are things they need to learn (and be taught) if they are going to be

successful. There is something fully admirable about this approach to work and life. And, we now feel confident saying, they are also people who have had positive experiences of professional development, which have given them an appetite for more.

This last finding is tremendously encouraging in terms of the potential to improve the field of Jewish education, one professional development program experience at a time. If people can be recruited to participate in a first high-quality professional development program, that experience will probably propel them to explore additional subsequent experiences.

Gratitude

The individuals we spoke with have been deeply grateful for the opportunities they have been given. They recognize that Jewish educators do not always have the chances to learn and grow in the ways they have, or to develop the same rich collegial relationships. One eloquent testimony from a SVARA participant gives powerful expression to these sentiments:

> *Kudos to JJF for doing this. Funding teacher training programs is so important, and they are involved in many of them; it's the way to go. SVARA is now on Cohort 4—that's a lot of people who learned these things. They got language and clarity; they can take it out into the world. It's not hundreds of people, but we are teaching others, so it spreads. Hopefully, it comes out in the way people run meetings, interact with each other, etc. I'm one of the oldest people that got accepted, I don't have that much more to give, but they still took me. The intergenerational opportunity is also really cool. There's a lot of "doing things right" between JJF and SVARA JJF—so I'll vote for them to continue.* —SVARA

For our team too, this has been a rare opportunity. It has been incredibly instructive to observe how people's perspectives about the same learning experience change over time, and how the outcomes created by those experiences take time to unfold. Introducing a longitudinal dimension to this work has been both breathtaking and humbling. We learned things we never expected to find. We have become aware, too, of the logistical challenges involved in this kind of longitudinal work. These lessons—the positive ones and the tough ones—help us feel better prepared and even more excited for the work we just started tracking Exceptional Jewish Leaders and Educators (EJLE).

Finding Commonality: Learnings from the Shared Outcomes Survey

Our efforts to develop a Shared Outcomes Survey has been one of the most innovative features of the evaluation component of the Jim Joseph Foundation's Professional Development Initiative. In previous rounds of reporting, we described our process for developing an evaluation instrument that partners at the 10 participating programs felt reflected what they sought to accomplish. A year ago, we shared interim findings from the data we gathered. Now, with all participating programs complete, we report what we have learned from the responses of 262 program participants, a 56% response rate. The surveys were completed between two months and six months after the conclusion of each program.

Our dataset now includes participants in Hebrew Union College's Executive MA, JCC Association's Sheva Center Leadership Institute, and the Jewish Federations of North America's Next Gen Fellows, programs that ran for two years or longer. The dataset also includes greater numbers of participants from programs that ran multiple cohorts, such as M^2 and the iCenter.

The findings—presented in an accompanying deck—are generally consistent with what we previously shared, with some important differences. The profile of respondents is generally unchanged: 84% identify as Jewish educators, 91% work full time, and almost half (47%) engage in both frontline work and supervision. Overall, the average age of respondents has not changed much either, although the sample now includes a somewhat less experienced population of educators: 61% have worked for five years or less in the field, and almost a quarter (23%) of respondents have worked for two years or less.

When reflecting on what they gained from their recently completed programs, graduates have highlighted above all what we characterize as "ways of thinking and doing." Their responses were most positive for items such as "I gained new ways of thinking about my work," "I learned valuable new information that I can use in my work," and "I further developed preexisting professional skills." Data from clinical interviews with alumni, conducted sometimes more than two years after a program's end, show that some of these practice-focused outcomes have been highly durable, more so than might have been expected. We speculate whether the durability of these outcomes might be related to the fact that between two-thirds and three-quarters of respondents report sharing these kinds of learnings ("new perspectives on what we do" and "practical tools that are relevant to our work") with their professional colleagues. This kind of sharing has likely contributed to ensuring that the program outcomes have not remained a private matter for the participants but have started to take root in their institutions.

Alumni also indicate that the programs have contributed strongly to their gaining a professional network, specifically to feeling "supported by a network of peers" and to "feeling connected to a larger community." These were priorities for many of the clinical interviewees when the programs started, and these outcomes

have consistently been a prominent feature of what participants say they gained from these experiences. That said, gaining a professional network or feeling part of a professional community does not mean that alumni have been in frequent contact with their fellow cohort members or program staff. While some have made use of these networks for professional support or for more personal needs (47% strongly agree that they have "stayed in touch with members of [their] cohort"), most seem to relate to these networks in less immediate terms. We wonder whether the networks help participants situate how they see themselves as professionals, but the networks are not themselves resources on which many actively draw.

As was the case with the interim findings, the Jewish outcomes produced by the programs have been relatively modest, especially in respect to the programs' contribution to participants' connection to Jews around the world and to the State of Israel; in fact, the average score for these items appears to have been boosted by those programs—most obviously the iCenter Fellowship and Makom/Moishe House—for which these matters were an explicit concern. Consistent with our interim analysis, we did find, however, that the less intense a participant's Jewish background was prior to the start of their program, the greater the Jewish or Israel-related gains they report as a result of the program. As we previously argued, and as confirmed by clinical interviews with participants over the years, the programs do seem to have played an important remedial role for Jewish professionals who do not possess high levels of Jewish social and cultural capital of their own.

Survey recipients were given an opportunity to respond to an open-ended question inviting them to elaborate on the ways in which they had grown in Jewish terms as a consequence of their program experience; just under half (128 respondents) did so. Much as was the case with what was found in relation to the broader outcomes of the programs, the most mentioned outcomes related to growth in knowledge and to building connections (Jewish knowledge and Jewish connection, in this instance). A minority (28 people—equivalent to just over 10% of all respondents) reported that what they gained from the program influenced their own personal Jewish practices, a profound expression of personal impact.

Our interim analysis revealed that to a small extent program outcomes were related to people's motivations when signing up, and whether they were motivated more by what we called "professional self-efficacy" or "holistic professional growth." These differences did not surface on this occasion. However, we did find that the greater people's aspirations were in either of these respects, the more they gained from the program overall. In other words, the hungrier people were for professional learning and growth of any kind, the more they gained from the program—a kind of self-fulfilling dynamic.

An important finding that was both replicated and even extended on this occasion highlighted that what participants gained from the programs in respect to four broad dimensions (leadership, Jewish connection, their sense of being able to contribute to their organization, and of being able to contribute to the sector in which they worked) were correlated with years of experience in the field. In all of these four cases, the more seasoned the respondent, the stronger the outcomes reported. This phenomenon could be explained in two

ways: either more experienced participants have had a greater appetite to share their learning, feeling more secure in their places of work, or the programs in which they participated were generally better suited to empowering more experienced professionals and did not fully resonate with a less seasoned population. In either case, it suggests that if the foundation supports the launch of an early career professional development opportunity for Jewish community professionals, the content of that program should be attuned to the developmental needs of the participants. The learning needs of Jewish professionals change with experience.

As our team wraps up its work with the Professional Development Initiative, we are especially pleased that the Shared Outcomes Survey has yielded meaningful data. We believe that our design process was helped enormously by the collegial atmosphere within the Professional Learning Community made up of grantee participants. The grantees were committed to helping something meaningful emerge from this work. We are hopeful that this experience can serve as a model for Exceptional Jewish Leaders and Educators grantees, although we recognize that they do not relate to one another with the same degree of co-commitment. At the very least, our experience has taught us (and it is something we will share with those EJLE grantees) that the search for shared outcomes across widely differing programs does not require operating at a level of abstraction that loses all substantive meaning.

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Shared Outcomes Survey

Final Results
April 2022

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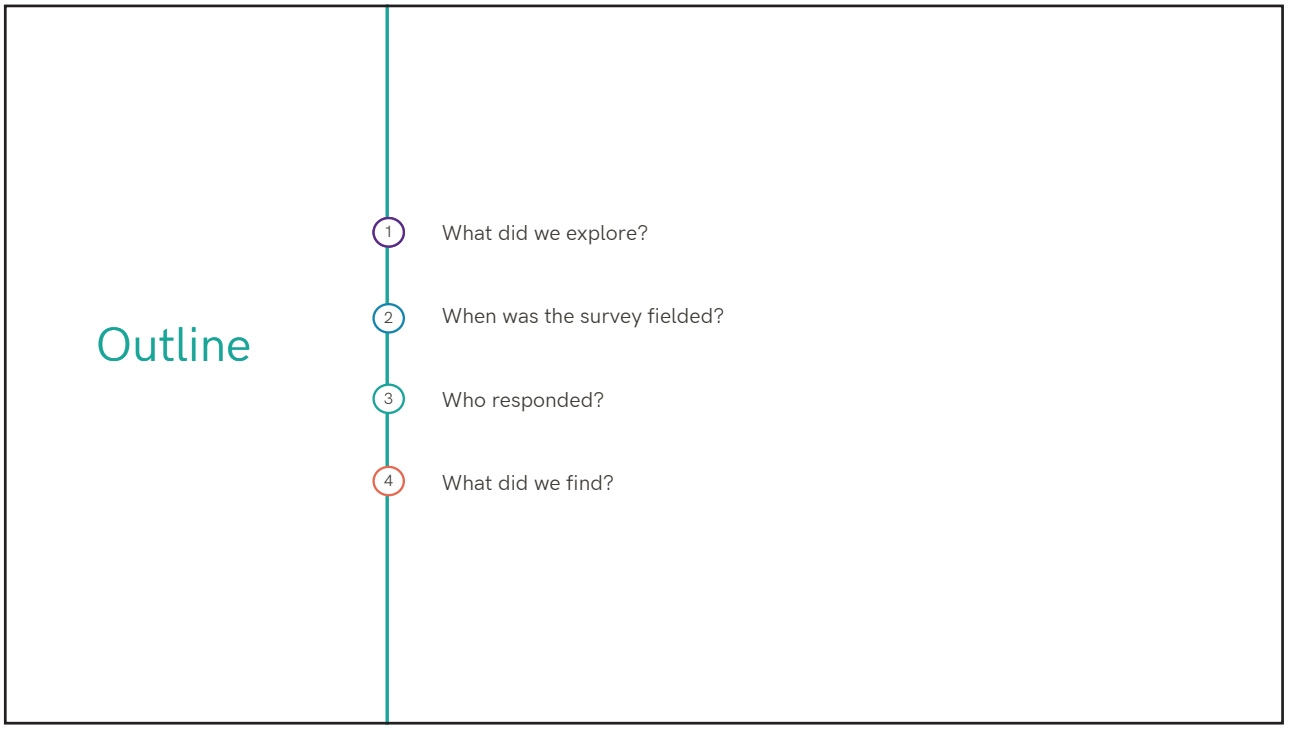
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What did we explore?
Conceptual Framework

4

Conceptual Framework
Ten Shared Outcomes

1. Gain sophisticated and increased knowledge
2. Gain skills or tools to better own practice
3. Feel (re)inspired about own profession
4. Gain knowledge of own leadership capacities
5. Develop a personal vision for Jewish educational leadership
6. Become an agent of change in own profession
7. Develop a community of practice
8. Experience personal Jewish growth
9. Change institutional cultures
10. Adopt a stance for inquiry

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When was the survey fielded?

Survey distribution details

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Fielding the survey

- The S.O.S. was fielded between January 2020 and December 2021
- The survey was fielded to 468 individuals served by 10 providers:

Program	Number of Participants	Number of Respondents	Response Rate
The Jewish Education Project: GenNow Fellowship	38	29	76%
Makom: 4HQ at Moishe House	74	23	31%
M² – Multiple Programs	113	65	58%
Ayeka: Soulful PD Program	22	10	45%
SVARA: Talmud Teacher Fellowship	26	12	46%
iCenter: Academic Certificate Program in Israel Education	60	37	62%
HUC – Executive MA in Religious Education	29	16	55%
JCCA – Sheva Center Leadership Institute	28	17	61%
JFNA – Next Gen Fellows	35	15	43%
Yiddish Book Center Teacher Seminar	43	20	49%
Total	**468**	**262**	**56%**

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Who responded?

Characteristics of survey respondents

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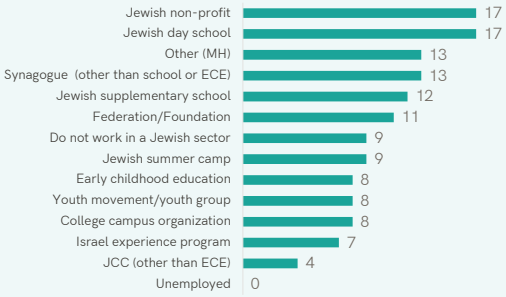
Characteristics of Respondents (N = 254)

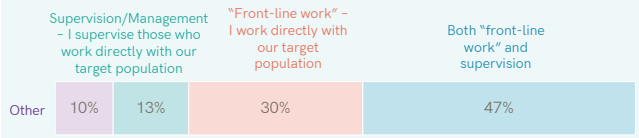
84% identify as Jewish educators

91% work full time

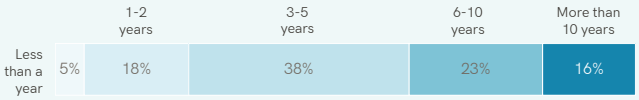
Professional Sector (%)



Role



How long have they worked in the field



Age

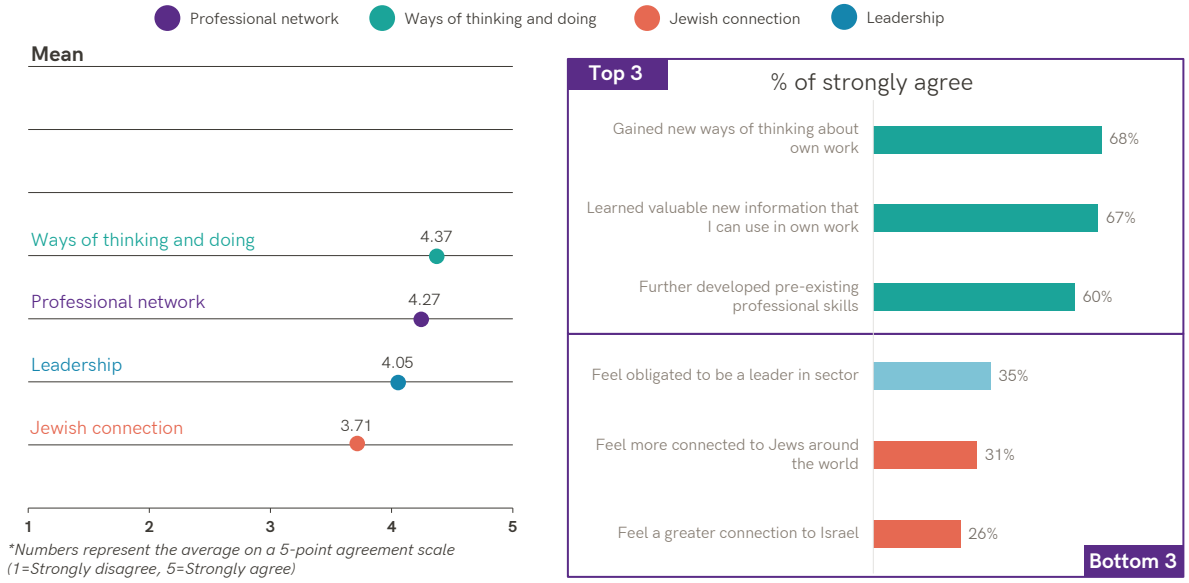
9

What did we find?

Shared outcomes findings

10

Knowledge, Skills, and Personal Gains



11

In what ways have you grown Jewishly? (Open-ended responses) [n=128]

Knowledge/Understanding (n=42)

I have a broader understanding of Jewish literature and communities around the world, as well as the dynamic works and histories still being discovered.

Jewish and/or Israel Connection (n=31)

I feel more connected to the breadth of Jewish community.

Personal Practice and Belief (n=28)

I have reflected on my own Jewish experience and relationship with Israel…I have made new choices re: living and practicing and belonging Jewishly.

Professional Jewish Practice (n=23)

I have more fluency in Jewish pedagogy and inherited Jewish sources that inform Jewish pedagogy.

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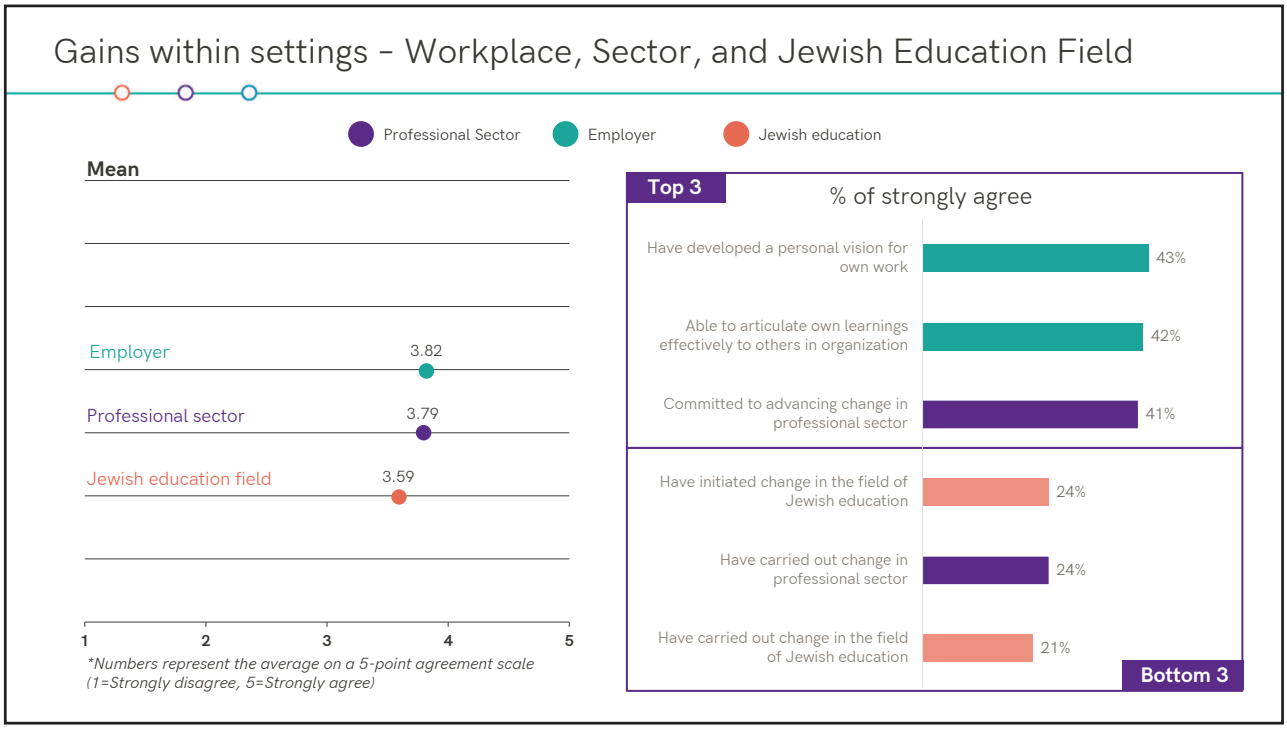
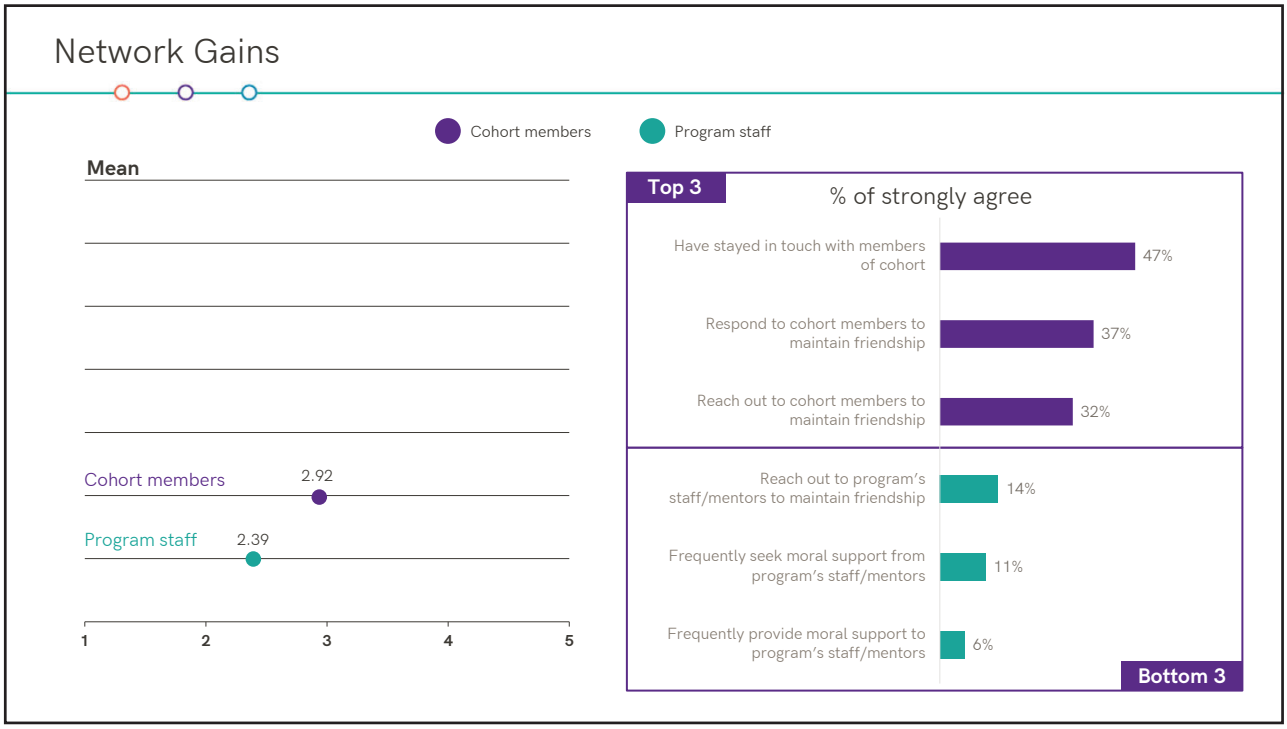
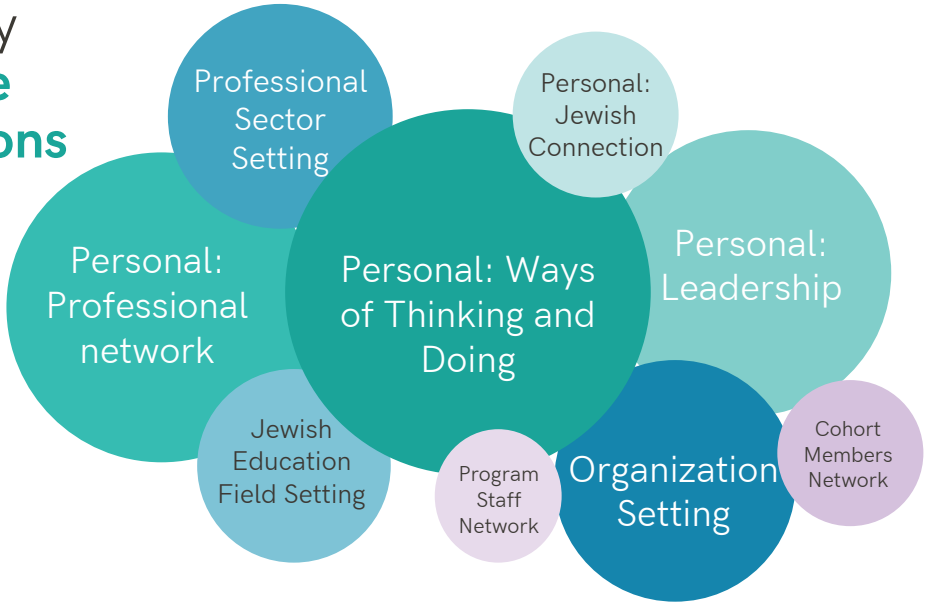

Gains within settings – Workplace, Sector, and Jewish Education Field
Professional Sector
Employer
Jewish education
Mean
Employer
3.82
Professional sector
3.79
Jewish education field
3.59
1
2
3
4
5
*Numbers represent the average on a 5-point agreement scale (1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree)
Top 3
% of strongly agree
Have developed a personal vision for own work
43%
Able to articulate own learnings effectively to others in organization
42%
Committed to advancing change in professional sector
41%
Have initiated change in the field of Jewish education
24%
Have carried out change in professional sector
24%
Have carried out change in the field of Jewish education
21%
Bottom 3

13


Network Gains
Cohort members
Program staff
Mean
Cohort members
2.92
Program staff
2.39
1
2
3
4
5
Top 3
% of strongly agree
Have stayed in touch with members of cohort
47%
Respond to cohort members to maintain friendship
37%
Reach out to cohort members to maintain friendship
32%
Reach out to program's staff/mentors to maintain friendship
14%
Frequently seek moral support from program's staff/mentors
11%
Frequently provide moral support to program's staff/mentors
6%
Bottom 3

14

Summary
Outcome Dimensions



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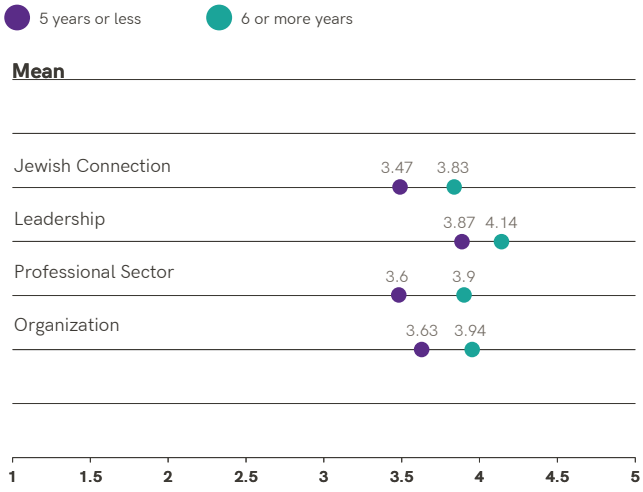
More experienced professionals gain more

Those who are more experienced have higher ratings on four dimensions:

- Jewish Connection (personal gains)
- Leadership (personal gains)
- Professional Sector (gains within settings)
- Organization (gains within settings)



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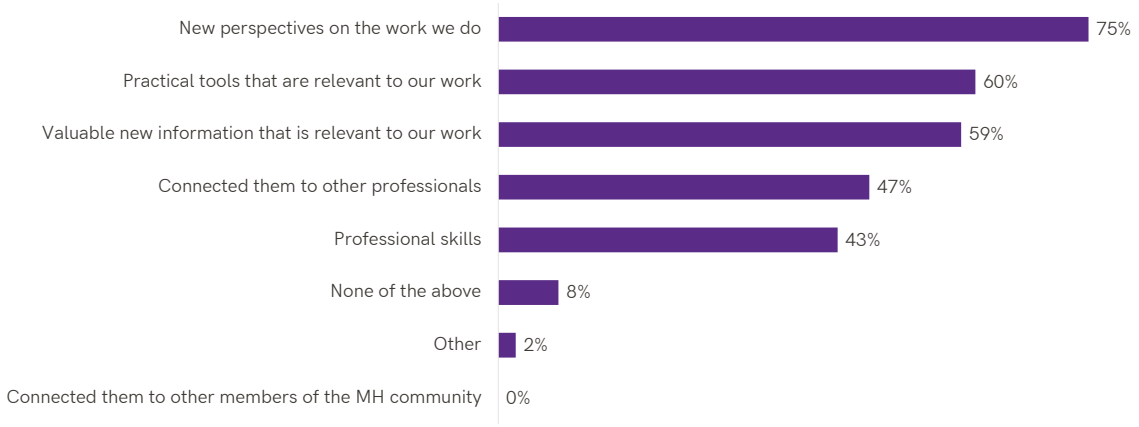
Sharing Learnings with Colleagues

As a result of participating, which of the following learning areas (if any) have you shared with your professional colleagues? (Select all that apply)



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Intensity of Prior Jewish Experiences Is Inversely Related to Jewish Outcomes

The less intense a participant's Jewish background before starting the program, the greater the Jewish gains associated with being in the program:

- Greater Jewish connection
- Higher contextual gains related to professional sector, and the Jewish education field in general (they feel more comfortable in the Jewish field)
- Greater leadership skills (they feel more ready to think of themselves as Jewish leaders)
- More likely to develop a community of practice with other cohort members (they have gained a professional Jewish community)

Programs serve a remedial role for those with less intense Jewish background

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